19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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342 tains numerous cracks and apertures, and may be easily removed to allow a corpse to be carried out. Similar partitions divide the sleeping apartment from the rest of the family-room. (See p. 65.)

361 342 When we come upon such a village, we may find it surrounded by a stockade, as in the case of those in the Tharrawaddy district, where protection is thus obtained from tigers and other animals of the jungle and also from human prowlers. The stockade is made of bamboo poles, re-inforced by four rows of sharp pickets woven in and out of the fence. (See pp. 55, 57.) The gate of the stockade is constructed of large bamboos suspended from a cross-piece, so that they knock against one another when any one enters. Thus, the [231] approach of a visitor is well announced. Once inside of the enclosure and past the multitude of yelping dogs which the villagers keep, the visitor comes to the ladder by which access is gained to the communal abode. The ladder, like everything else, is made of bamboo and has small loose rungs that can be easily removed. To an American it looks inverted, for it is narrow at the bottom and wide at the top. If the sun is high, heat is reflected from the burning hot bamboos. Mounting to the floor, one steps gingerly along, 342 ●352 354 415 fearing the round flooring may turn under him. The hollow bamboos resound, as each rubs and creaks against its fellows. The whole population seems to be peering out of their doors or peeping through the cracks. The visitor enters a doorway, without its door. The first thing in the room that strikes his attention is the fireplace ("hpa k' pu"), which is only a little way from the entrance. The intervening space is largely filled with water-joints, rice baskets, and various household utensils. This is called the water-joint place ("hti pu law"). The fireplace consists of four upright bamboos fastened in the floor beams below and reaching to the cross-beams above. On the floor a rough box-like enclosure is built around the bottoms of the poles and filled in with dirt and ashes. Three round stones, or more in case the family has two pots boiling at once, give support to the cooking vessels, while the fire underneath is fed with dry bamboo fuel. About three feet above the ashes there is a shelf made of bamboo splints with their hard surfaces downward to the fire. The soot deposit on the under side of this shelf prevents the flames from doing any damage. Pots, plates, and other utensils find their convenient resting-place upon the shelf. One or two other shelves above this serve as catch-alls for herbs, baskets, tin lamps, unused food, large knives ("dahs"), and almost anything else that finds its way into the house. A hole cut in each

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of the two front poles of the fireplace a little way above the floor serves as a holder for the bamboo stick kept for stirring the cooking rice or other foods.

A smaller box of ashes in the center of the room supplies a fireplace for the warming of the family when the air is chilly of nights and mornings. It is then comfortable to sit about the fire, as one visits and tells stories.

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The Karen have little use for artificial light. They get up with the sun and go to bed with the chickens. Often the flaring light of the bamboo fuel in the fireplace serves for light, while they entertain visitors or do odd bits of belated work. When they need something more than this, they use a cup containing crude earth-oil (petroleum is found in large quantities in Upper Burma) with a wick sticking out, or they make torches from the resinous oil of the "xaw" *(Dipterocarpus)* tree. These enormous trees when tapped yield a good run of oil. After each run of sap they scorch the hole and get another run. The oil is mixed with bits of dry wood or punk and moulded into sticks about a cubit long and an inch in diameter by putting it into joints of small bamboo. When it has dried, it is wrapped in palm or pineapple leaves and tied up with bark fibre. When needed for use, one end is loosened and applied to the fireplace for lighting. It is then set on a rough stand fashioned out of wood, on which it rests in an oblique position and in this manner burns to the best advantage. Nowadays little tin lamps made by Burmese tinsmiths after the pattern of the old European lamps are in common use. These hold a cotton wick and give a little light and some smoke, as they have no chimneys.

A Torch with Its Stand

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Usually beyond the cooking place a small partition extends out about four feet from the wall, forming a little alcove and hiding from view the family sleeping-room. The latter is a small apartment not more than eight or ten feet each way and is supplied with either a few rush mats, such as the Burmans are in the habit

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342 352 of sleeping on, or a single large bamboo mat, besides a quantity of old clothes, blankets, pillows, and rags scattered about or hanging from the rough ends of the walls. At either the front or back of the large outer room, whichever is toward the east—the place of honor in a Karen house—is a raised platform called the "hso hko." This is about a cubit's height from the floor and has a mat on it worn shiny with much sitting. It is the place where guests are received, especially if they are people of note. Here against the wall are a few pillows, which may be half-round bamboos of giant size, that is, from eight to ten inches in diameter, or cloth pillows filled with fibre from the cotton tree *(Bombax heterophylla)*. The guest is invited to sit on the platform and to partake of the contents of the fragrant betel-box, which is sure to be hospitably pushed in front of him. The cradle usually hangs from the crossbeams in the middle of the room, being held up by fibre ropes, although occasionally elephant chains are called into use to give full measure of security. The cradle itself may be a blanket swung up at the four corners, or it may be part of the trunk of a large hollow tree. A basket-work cradle is scarcely ever found in old Karen homes.

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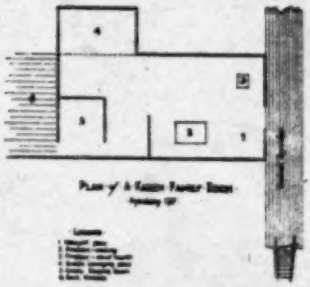

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343 At the back of the family apartment the bamboo joists and flooring project several feet beyond the wall, forming a primitive back veranda where clothes are hung to dry; rice (paddy), fish, fruit, and vegetables are set out in the sun, and other domestic operations are carried on in private.

345 575 In a few Karen villages a young men's club-room ("blaw") is still maintained, but not in most. Where such a room exists, it does not differ in general appearance from a family-room, except that it has no partitions. The hearth in the middle of the space serves as a social fireside on cold mornings and evenings. At the east end a raised dais extends the width of the room, being used both for reception and for sleeping purposes. Guests, unless closely related to some family in the village, usually sleep here, except when, as a mark of respect, they are invited to sleep in a room apart on the "hso hko" with the men of the house. Women guests sleep in the family sleeping-room together with the women folk and children.

342 177 The old type of Karen village-house, such as we have been describing above, is being modified by contact with the Burmese

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larger strip, which is nearly two yards long and about forty inches wide, are sewed together, and the skirt is finished. The cloth for a man's garment is cut and sewed in much the same way.

III. Mat-Making and Basketry

The making of mats and baskets is almost wholly confined to men, who prepare the materials out of rattan and bamboo and spend their leisure hours weaving them. Common mats ("klau"), such as are used as floor coverings in their houses and to sleep on, and the large ones that serve as winnowing and threshing-floors in the hills,[3] are woven of bamboo strips about half an inch wide in checker-board pattern. The strips do not run parallel with the edges of the mat, but diagonally at an angle of forty-five degrees. The better and stronger mats are made of strips with the silicious outer surface intact, giving them a smooth and glossy appearance. The softer rush mats of Burmese manufacture are often found in Karen houses, but are not made by any of the occupants, except such as have learned the art from their neighbors.

The people distinguish between several different kinds of baskets, for which they have particular names and special uses. The large baskets ("kū") for carrying paddy and other produce from the fields to their houses are shaped like an elongated egg with a truncated smaller end and are slung on the back with a bark-fiber strap which passes over the forehead and attaches to loops on either side a little above the middle of the basket. When thus carried, the receptacle reaches below the waist and a third of its own length above the shoulders. If the bearer is heavily laden, he or she partly relieves the weight on the strap by hooks of horn or bamboo root, hung from the shoulders and supporting the bottom of the basket. These large receptacles are woven in diagonal pattern with small strands of rattan, those of the upper half being less than a quarter of an inch in width while those of the lower half are a little wider. The bottom of such baskets are square and flat, and its edges are bound with round rattans. From the corners rattan stays are run vertically to the large oval mouth of the basket, which is finished off with a large rattan around the edge. A midrib down each side from top to bottom adds strength and durability.

Cotton and vegetables are carried in loosely woven and large-meshed baskets, called "seh," meaning rough or flimsy. A man will

[3] See cuts, p. 82.